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JFK ACT RELEASE

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Allen-Scott Report

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Ray Hunt Cost Over $5 Million

Mr. Allen

By PAUL SCOTT

Washington —Agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation went through one very tense period and spent more than $5 million during their brilliantly conducted two-continent man hunt for James Earl Ray, the accused killer of Dr. Martin Luther King.

After successfully tracking and locating Ray in London early in May, the G-men temporarily lost his trail when he slipped through their surveillance network and flew to Portugal.

While Ray's disappearance almost caused a near panic among top Justice Department officials here, cooler-headed FBI agents directing the search kept the search from collapsing by immediately setting up a new dragnet.

With only the lead that Ray, alias Raymon George Sueyd, had apparently fled to Europe, the FBI agents reasoned that because of his temperament and the foreign language barrier he would soon return to an English-speaking country.

Special watches for Ray were then carefully organized at all ports of entry in Great Britain, Canada, and the U. S., on the belief that the suspect would try to return to one of those nations.

Before any heads within the agency could roll, the swift chain of events that followed proved the effectiveness of the FBI strategy.

Eleven days after his second disappearance, Ray, alias Sneyd, flew back to London from Lisbon. With the help of British authorities, the FBI again picked up his trail.

Ray was then kept under close surveillance until he suddenly prepared again to depart Great Britain for Europe — this time for Brussels. He was arrested at London Airport before he could board his plane.

Despite Ray's capture, the FBI investigation of King's assassination is far from being closed.

One agent involved in the inquiry says privately that "the arrest of Ray is only the beginning of this inquiry." He points out that "Ray is the key to determining the others involved in the assassination plot."

For instance, FBI and Canadian authorities are still investigating how Ray was able to execute carefully checked is Ray's contact with a person, whom the FBI photographed with King at a major U. S. airport.

One of the ironies of the successful FBI investigation is that just two months before the King assassination, the bureau was obliged to cut in half the number of agents in Europe, including those in London as a result of President Johnson's order slashing overseas personnel of all government security and intelligence agencies.

In their intensive search for King's killer, the FBI spent more than $5 million in the first nine weeks of its investigation. At times, upward to 3,000 agents were assigned to the case.

Half that number of agents are still involved in the continuing investigation. In addition to running down new leads, they are rechecking Ray's travels to and from Memphis, the scene of the assassination.

When Ray's trail led to London, however, many of these agents were sent back overseas with instructions to forget about the economy move until the suspected assassin was picked up.

One of the most imporant decisions that President Johnson will make before leaving office next January concerns possible publication of sealed documents from the Warren Commission inquiry of the assassination of President Kennedy.

At least 20 per cent of the commission's files remain locked in the National Archives, where the full record of the Kennedy assassination probe is filed.

A list of more than 250 of the sealed documents was prepared recently by attorneys of the Justice Department for further reexamination, to determine if their publication should be recommended to the President.

Most intriguing are reports of the Central Intelligence Agency dealing with the private reaction of high Cuban officials to the assassination.

Other deals with a top secret CIA memorandum from Richard Helms (now CIA director) to J. Lee Rankin, chief counsel of the Warren Commission. It is listed under the heading: "Report of conversations between Cuban President and Cuban Ambassador."

Also still under seal is a CIA

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